

LOVE INTEREST AND TRAGEDIES

A PROBLEM IN THE HISTORY OF EDIPUS REX.

It Always Needed Love Interest for the Public—A Theory of the Old Dramatists—Changes by Cornelle, Dryden and Voltaire—Some Added Episodes.

What the theatre managers of the present day call heart interest was not discovered by them, however confident they may be that without their discernment such a thing would never have been heard of. Yet the question vexed even the early writers who wanted to make use of the legend of the club footed king. They realized then, just as William Lockhart did when he talked last winter to an interviewer, that there was nothing so important in fiction as the man, the woman and the possible baby if the public demand was to be satisfied. With the classical directness of the ancients, however, there was no such digression in the legend of Edipus.

Students of the drama recall that Cornelle was the first of the moderns to write an "Edipus." It was more or less inevitable that a drama which stifled humanity in its classic traditions to the extent that the playwrights of France had done should be compelled to keep to subjects that were suited to such treatment. So there was the unceasing repetition of the mythological story. But Cornelle had enough of the blood of the ancients in his veins to depart from the quality of the old theme. He realized in 1657 that the public, accustomed as it was to the stilted movement of the tragedy of that day in France, would still expect to find some relief for its sentimental imaginations in a love story between two young persons.

There were reasons why Cornelle at this time should have neglected no precaution that might help him win his public. Four years had passed since the failure of "Pertharite" and during that period no play had come from his pen. So with a dedication to Fouquet and the introduction of two subordinate but important characters he came forward with "Edipus" after his period of exile. His love interest was confined to one, a daughter of Laius and Thebes, King of Athens. Their story, which is a part of the legend, is intertwined throughout the play with that of Edipus and Jocasta. Even his sentimental variation on the theme of pity and horror did not avail to save the work. Doubtless contemporary criticism condemned this deference to the taste of the people. Probably the audience did take pleasure out of what was as near an approach to humanity as was possible at that time. The failure of the play doubtless came from the horror of the motive, which even the age accustomed to take the Greek myths as the backbone of its drama could not be made to tolerate.

More of what an American playwright calls bric-a-brac and simpler minds know as the classics of the French theatre were dedicated to the myth of Edipus. Voltaire was only 19 when in 1718 his version of the tragedy was written, and six years later he saw it performed for forty-six times, which marked a degree of popular success denied to his predecessor a century before. For eleven years the tragedy maintained its place in the repertoire of the day and even attained, like some of the musical farces today, the dignity of a second edition, which is a species of canonization rare enough.

Voltaire was too much a modern not to recognize the classic concentration of the interest on the fate of Edipus and Jocasta as a defect in his century. But he did not attempt to add to these heroic ingredients the man and the woman and the possible baby, but selected other means of enriching the action. He marked the trail which so many of his countrymen since have followed with success. It is to the wife Jocasta that he assigns the love interest. Years before the action of the drama she has loved Philoctetes, who returns to Thebes, quite as John Drew did in "Smith," to find her the wife of Edipus, reigning in succession to Laius. They had been betrothed in youth and Jocasta still loves the returned wanderer. It is when Edipus is accused of being the cause of the plague at Thebes, a charge which had also been made against Philoctetes, that this hero disappears from the scene, leaving the two principals to face the tragedy quite as they do in the play of Sophocles.

In spite of his success, Voltaire was ashamed of having added the episodes of the first scenes with Philoctetes. He blamed the necessity on the French actors, who would not listen to a discussion that did not contain a romance. So he gave them the love story they have been so fond of ever since. That he did not obscure the tragic swiftness of the fate that befalls the husband and wife showed an improvement over the other French version that kept in the two lovers until the end. The lack of what would now be called sufficient episode was felt by the playwright, who complained that the intrigue of Edipus was entirely too meagre to supply a playwright of his day with sufficient material for a drama.

Of course to the present generation there is more interest in the simple grandeur of the original than in the play which substituted for gold the tinsel of the pretentious imitation. If there is any fair comparison between the acted play and one that is read the play given by Mr. Kellard at the Irving Place Theatre seems more modern than those written centuries later. Such is, however, the strength, one might say the immortality of perfect taste in form. "Edipus" as it was written by Sophocles is just as inevitably the only manner of telling such a tale, as the twisted bodies of the Laocoon alone could represent its story.

It might interest those who retain a sympathy for the beauties of dramatic bric-a-brac to see the version of Edipus that Dryden wrote. The English poet made his offering to the genius of Sophocles between Cornelle and Voltaire. The author has some useful theories about the play. He is not only entertained a respect for a love interest but he knew the danger that may lie in the unexpected preponderance of the subordinate character. Then he realized the value of such purely practical details as the plucking of good qualities in the case of his hero. It was for that reason he did not select such an important person as the King of Athens for the hero of his amorous episodes, but took instead Andronicus, King of Argos. His opposite in the love games is Eurycleia, who bears the closest relation to her prototype in being also a daughter of Laius.

In spite of his dexterity in keeping his incidental characters from injuring the value of the main narrative, the English poet erred in the same way that Cornelle had, and obscured the splendor of the main theme by his additions. Then the love interest in the English play does not

follow the line recommended by Mr. Locke and recognized by Cornelle, but ends in the death of Eurycleia, which with its accompanying incidents forms in reality the climax of the tragedy, the death of Jocasta and the blinding of Edipus falling into second place.

So Dryden was, like many other skilled playwrights who recognize the mistakes of their predecessors and carefully guard against them, only to fall into errors that are just as serious, if not the same mistakes that they have been keen enough to detect at once in the work of others. But if that had not been the occasional experience of Dryden he would never have been a dramatist and never have lived the playwright's life.

Pictures and the theatre are probably closer to-day than they ever were, although the union dates from an earlier period than admirers of the progress of Mr. Phipps and his necked daughters would ever have suspected. When the Gibson girls and their father were made the material of a drama there was less novelty about the process than there appeared to be. The stage has never discovered inspiration from the other arts. When David Garrick delivered the prologue to "The Clandestine Marriage" and recited the line that "painter and poet each should steal with decency from one another," he was foreshadowing the obligation to Hogarth which he more explicitly stated further along in the verse. Before that day Hogarth had proved that pictures may tell a story as strongly as to hear transfer to the stage.

Theophilus Cibber had converted the story known as "The Harlot's Progress" into a musical comedy in 1732 and the same source inspired the ballad opera known as "The Jew Decoyed."

It took, of course, twenty years for Colman and Garrick to think of the idea of "The Clandestine Marriage," whereas Casimir Delavigne saw Paul Delaroche's painting of the two princes in the tower while it was on the easel. So the suggestion for his play, "Les Enfants d'Edouard," was ready for the Théâtre Français by May 18, 1833, two years after the picture had been shown at the Salon. Delavigne dedicated the play to the artist, but there was little fame garnered either for the author or the painter who had inspired him, since the work was a failure. Delavigne's attempt to combine the classic style which was really his métier with some of the romanticism which was in this case no more than diluted Shakespeare, brought the drama to disaster.

When Denham Thompson wrote "Two Sisters" he said he had been inspired by the familiar painting which shows the victor pausing at the crossing of two Paris streets. In the carriage is the richly dressed Parisienne who forms a striking contrast in her finery to the humble honesty of the sister who stands waiting for her carriage to pass on. Only last spring at the Winter Garden review, there was the duel between the two half clothed women which was copied closely from a one time looked down on many a thirty guest as his foot sought involuntarily for the iron rail. "After the Ball," with its duel between the masked Pierrot and Harlequin was utilized in a London pantomime.

More serious in its artistic results was the inspiration that Douglas Jerrold found in Sir David Wilkie's two pictures, "The Rent Day" and "Destitute for the Rent." When the play was given at the Drury Lane in 1832 the artist marvelled that his two pictures could have suggested so much to the dramatist. Less important to the success of "Meg's Diversions" when it was first acted was the interpretation of a salacious incident in the French actor's "Broken Vows." But that has been done frequently. Daniel Frohman incorporated into the unfortunate "Change Alley" of Louis Napoleon Parker a scene copied exactly after Ward's famous pictorial representation of the effects of the South Sea Bubble. But that did not avail to save what was in reality a work of considerable charm and fancy.

BROOKLYN AND THE BEACHES.
The Montauk Opens on Labor Day—Vaudeville at Brighton Beach.
With a special holiday matinee on Labor Day the Montauk Theatre will throw open its doors for the season. Manager Edward Trail announces that his bookings for the year will be the best Brooklyn has known. The opening offering will be "The Country Boy," which has been seen here before. With this exception and three others—"Seven Days," "The Commuters" and Robert Hilliard in "A Fool There Was"—all the season's bookings will be new plays.

The Crescent Theatre will be opened for the season Saturday evening, September 2, with Lillian Russell's successful play "Wildfire," written by George Broadhurst and H. V. Hobart. Percy G. Williams announces that all the old favorite members of the company—George Wilson, Mr. Buchanan, Mr. Schofield, Mr. Briggs, Mr. Egerton, Mr. Hanlon, Miss Gertrude Rivers, Miss Isadore Martin and Miss Matilda Deshon, will be back, together with his new leading lady, Miss Leah Winslow. She will appear in the part created by Miss Russell in "Wildfire."

The Orpheum opens its season to-morrow afternoon with a programme headed by Amelia Bingham, who will be seen in an act especially devised to display her abilities. It is called "Great Moments From Greek Play." Sam Chipp and Mary Marble will appear in their dainty and delightful offering "In Old England," and looming up conspicuously among the array of funmakers are Jack Wilson and company and the Orpheum orchestra. Barry and Wolford in a skit, "It Happened on Monday," the Courtney Sisters, dancers; McConnell and Simpson in a hilarious singing, dancing and tap dancing play, "The Three Reactions in their

concoction of acrobatic pranks, and the Flying Martins, daring aerial artists, are among the other features of the bill.

For the closing week of the season Manager Breed of the Brighton Beach Music Hall will offer an entertaining bill headed by John C. Rice and Sallie Cohen in their newest comedy sketch called "The Paths of the Primroses." A headliner new to the beach will be Stella Tracey, the diminutive comedienne, who will sing several songs of the popular variety. Other features will be Cook and Lorenz, the funny tramp comedians; Zillah Covington and Rose Wilber in a playlet called "The Parson's Lily Dean"; and company in a new comedy sketch, "The Mosaic," the novelty snowshoe dancers; Alf Grant and Ethel Hoag, singers and dancers, and the Dare brothers, gymnasts and strong men.

At the New Brighton this week Frank Timney returns for the second time this season, this time with a new act calculated to reveal the funny burnt cork comedian at his funniest. Lydia Barry, a Brooklyn girl and a big favorite with Brooklyn audiences, will make her appearance in a singing act, and the comedy piece of the evening, strengthened by the appearance of William Simon and company in a new version of "Flinders's Furnished Flat," and Jolly Wild and company in their well known specialty. Among others are W. B. Patton and company in a comedy sketch, the Five Musical Hodges, Ruby Raymond and company, the Mosaic, and the Altus brothers, club jugglers.

Unlike most entertainments of this class "The Taxi Girls," the attraction at the Star Theatre this week, will offer a distinct musical show and a complete vaudeville programme, and not that which is seen in the majority of burlesques, where one or three acts generally constitute the olio.

The Great Star and Garter Show opens a week's engagement at the Gayety Theatre to-morrow. The show, while familiar to theatregoers, is entirely new this season. A two act musical satire entitled "The Flirting Widow" is the vehicle. The cast includes Harry Lester Mason, Jack Conway, James J. Collins, George Seitz, Harry McDermott, Eloise Matthei, and the popular comedienne, Corinne Lahy and a real beauty chorus direct from Lobster Square, New York.

Coney Island's Mardi Gras will begin September 11. While the nightly parades will be a feature of the annual celebration as usual, Luna Park will be the centre of merriment. Situated as it is in the very heart of the island, around which the hands of the dial of fun and frolic turn, each year Frederic Thompson provides amusement equal to the festive occasion.

At the free vaudeville stage at Palisade Park there will be a complete change of programme this week, and at the rustic opera house the Aborn Comic Opera Company, which has enjoyed a most prosperous summer at the park, will make its farewell production of the season, a revival of Gilbert and Sullivan's masterpiece, "The Mikado."

Now that school days are only three weeks distant the management of Glen Island will devote its energies to making every day a "children's day" for the remainder of the holidays. This does not mean that any of the other amusements have drawn the crowds of amusement seekers to the island will be abandoned.

TO LAY A GHOST.
Seven Clergymen With Seven Candles and a Ceremony in Latin.
From the London Daily Mail.
Not many people perhaps can say that they are without superstitions of any kind, but on the other hand not many still believe whole heartedly in the ghost lore that in spite of education crops up in out of the way corners of the mind.

Miss M. L. Lewis has collected some interesting stories from the byways of ghost and folk lore and incidentally traces back to their source some of the old customs that still flourish here and there.

It is only a few years ago that the origin of certain old customs, a relic of superstition that we gain our first idea of how deeply rooted in men's minds during the Dark and Middle Ages was the fear of the supernatural, and particularly of evil spirits.

"On this day, in a certain country, the cottagers, after the morning scurrying, take a piece of chalk and draw a rough geometrical pattern round the edge of the threshold stone. This they do not knowing that their ancestors thought it a sure way of keeping the devil from entering the house."

"Another custom often noticeable in country parishes is the reluctance to bury the dead on the north side of the churchyard; this is because evil spirits were always supposed to lurk on that side of the church porch."

"One reason given why very old yew trees are so often found in country churchyards is that originally these trees were planted to supply the peasants with wood for their bows, for in lawless times it was soon discovered that the yew place where there would be safe from night's murders was the churchyard, where not the most hardened thief dared venture between darkness and dawn."

"An old writer tells us: 'The mode of dealing with the dead by commanding it to tell you what it is and what its business during the narration of its business a ghost must by no means be interrupted by questions of any kind; so doing is extremely dangerous.'"

It is not every one who is acquainted with the precise meaning of the expression "laying a ghost," which Brand in his "Antiquaries" advised as the best remedy for cases of troublesome hauntings. "Sometimes," he says, "ghosts appear and disturb a house without deigning to give a reason for their doings, with these the shortest way is to lay them."

Enoch Faire's Last Joke

Abe Cronkite Finds a Missing Letter.

"I did my best to dissuade your uncle," said Judge Josiah Marcellus to Nathan Travell as they consulted together in the library after the will of the late Enoch Faire had been read to the assembled relatives in the back parlor; "but you know the old saying, 'A willful man must have his way.'"

"Well, he was both timorous and obstinate; and if those two qualities don't join to make wilfulness, I don't know what qualities do. As a result, here you are, a young unmarried man, left what this big house on your hands, which you can never sell for anything like its value, and saddled with the care of \$300,000 which you can't use or dispose of. Preposterous!"

"We may come across the secret letter of instructions yet," replied Travell, "but if we don't, Judge, I want you to submit a stated case to the courts and get a judicial construction. I won't have anything to do with the money otherwise. Think how that hungry pack downstairs will yelp and bite after me now they know that the letter is missing!"

"You have got a wise head on those broad young shoulders of yours, Nathan," returned the Judge admiringly. "And let me tell you, though I am too old a lawyer ever to predicate positively what a court may do or may not do, I have my opinion that that photograph will be seen in the papers as to give you possession of this fund without bond or accountability until the letter is produced. I can't see any other meaning possible to its broad, positive language."

"But how about the house? Won't you find it too much of a burden to keep it up?"

"Oh, I can swing it all right, Judge. My business has picked up wonderfully since my little consultation with you last year. Besides, it is a matter of pride, don't you know? I like to be known as the head of the family; the only known heir at all events of Enoch Faire. I shall not only keep up this way of living but improve upon it. People call a man at his own valuation these days."

The court fully sustained Judge Marcellus's contention. Not only did it hold that the naked title to the fund at once vested in Travell but also that if after the eighteen months allowed for the settlement of the estate and due search still no trace of the letter of instruction could be found, then on application full title should be decreed to him.

"It is more reasonable to presume," said the Judge who wrote the decision, "that the testator chose to eliminate the condition he had imposed on this bequest, for such by its terms it is, by destroying this letter, than that the elaborate precautions he took to prevent its existence should be without becoming known to any one until after the reading of his will subsequent to his death could have in any wise proved of no avail."

Just what these elaborate precautions were can best be shown by an account of what took place in the big, lonely house immediately after the funeral. At the suggestion of Judge Marcellus the relatives assembled in the back parlor. There was John Blodgett, a cousin, middle aged, respectable and well to do, with his sickly wife, Rachel, and a slanting line of children. There was Miss Annette Crum, the only child of a deceased cousin, pretty, trim and self-sufficient, as a young woman should and would be, according to her mind at least, who had had to make her own way in the world. And there was Nathan Travell, already the object of uneasy glances from the others, who recognized that he had been the favorite of the deceased, if indeed that gloomy recollection had ever so extended to him.

These uneasy glances became hostile glances when the will was read. It devised the house to Travell in fee simple, subject to the condition that he should pay \$300,000, but subject to instructions contained in a certain sealed letter, and these two provisions, as the Judge dryly announced, disposed of all the estate, body and parcel.

"Where is this letter?" growled John Blodgett. "If we are going to be buncoed, I for one want to know why and how."

And his wife's look of spiteful wrath shot down the slanting line of her children to settle into scorn on Annette Crum's pretty face.

"I will resume the reading of the will," said the Judge, and he went on as follows: "Said letter of instruction I have safeguarded in manner following: At a time when I was alone in the house I put it in a certain place, which has stood for so many years on top of the high bookcase in the back parlor. As I well know, the letter is not to be disturbed or even dusted. There could not be a safer place."

"Before taking the letter from its secret resting place," said the Judge, "I desired to say that I drew this will with my own hand in my private office, no one being present or within sight or sound except the testator himself. It was signed and acknowledged before two clerks of mine, so folded over that its contents could not be seen, and the witnesses immediately returned to their duties in the outer office. I then locked it in an inner compartment of my private safe, to which no one has access except myself, and there it has remained until I took it out and brought it down here to-day."

"One would dream of questioning your care or fidelity, Judge Marcellus," declared Mr. Blodgett.

Having stiffly bowed his acknowledgments, the Judge touched a button in the wall.

"Please bring the steps, Ellen," he said to the housekeeper.

"I don't even know that I would get anything if the letter was found."

"Well, you do know that you won't get anything if it isn't found. Oh, I have no patience!"

"You are wrong though, Rachel, about old Ellen," continued Blodgett by way of a diversion. "She was in the office yesterday. She has left Travell because she couldn't stand such goings on. I am sure if she had her way the money would go to those who would make better use of it."

"She has left her place, has she?" cried Rachel eagerly. "Then it is vacant, and Travell will be keen to fill it with that household of company. I am going to apply, John."

"You are going to apply?"

"That's what I said. I can make myself up so that even the children wouldn't know me, and you yourself know whether I'm competent or not."

"But—"

"But? While you are butting and butting I'll get ready."

"I was only going to ask who will take care of the house and the children while you are away, dear," explained Blodgett, yielding to necessity and perhaps in his heart not sorry to yield. "Would Annette come for nights?"

"No, in the very letter in which she tells of her preparations, while and within two hours had so swept her on to success that she was installed as the new housekeeper, Miss Purrett by name, in the big house. Before luncheon was served, not only knew the servants and had taught them to keep their respective places too but she was able to catalogue in her casual way the pretensions and defects of the various guests. In all this preliminary work Krantz, the servicable butler, proved of much aid."

"Was this this all the progress that Mrs. Blodgett made that day toward knowing and showing that she knew what was what, Julie, the Grattans' maid, presently came into the pantry to take some lunch to her young mistress, Miss Sophia Grattan, who was indisposed. The housekeeper looked up as the girl glided from the gloom of the hall with the disfavor she always visited upon comeliness, but when she looked again in the full light her sour expression relaxed."

"Julie had no style. She acted like one made in the rough. Her carriage was like her person seemed well formed, they were shadowed and distorted by masses of coarse black hair worn low over the forehead."

"She lived up to her name, the money and the house and all are yours," said the Judge. "I have made sure that your not finding this letter for a time can do no more than occasion delay, and that is just what I hope for and want. In a word, while you feel in honor bound not to use the money, you will be able to judge for yourself of the parasites and harpies who have made my life so wretched for years. Of course they will at once infect you with their selfish schemes, the ungrateful grasping Blodgett and his worse half, the detestable son of a Rachel, the presuming Grattans and their silly, subservient daughter."

"Here it is, John," interposed the so-called Miss Purrett, taking from her bosom a glittering coin. "No wonder I couldn't understand why it looked smoother than it felt."

"I found it where no one was apt to look for it, in his Bible. Of course it seems to me too that there may be a message on it that won't do us any harm or Travell any good."

"Old Faire was always changing his mind; you know that from our own experience with him. And so if he really did destroy the sealed letter, as I've about come to believe, for there isn't a sign of it anywhere, though I've hunted high and low, he may have repented of it at the last and written down on the coin his original intentions. I'd flash it on them if I were you."

"If I only had a glass to make sure," hesitated Blodgett.

"Ah, yes, that must be it. You will be interested, all of you, to know what I'm only lately discovered, and that is that my good Uncle Enoch devoted much of his life to collecting a list of mortal sins in writing, marvelously small. I looked away his tools and glass only the other day. Why, what is the matter with you, man?"

"Your pardoning, sir," replied Krantz, the butler, humbly. "I had a sudden idea."

"Well, take this key to the writing desk in my room and fetch down the glass before you have another. Why, nothing short of a ghost ought to make a man start like that."

Travell took the glass which Krantz made haste to bring and studied the polished surface of the coin intently. While he did so it was curious to note, at least so thought Judge Marcellus, how Mansfield Grattan on his right and John Blodgett opposite reflected a common expression of mingled hope and fear.

"There is nothing here for you to sigh for or cry for," Blodgett remarked. "I should say that the glass is an infinitely minute transcription of the Gospel according to St. Mark. By Jove, Krantz, what are you trying to do now? Are you drunk or dilly?"

Ignoring the excited shout of his master and the amazed looks of the company, Krantz advanced from the rear parlor to the Judge, carefully bearing the begrimed bust of Uncle William. He set it in front of the Judge, who alone shared his calm, and after a brief whisper he adroitly reached the magnifying glass, and then stood at stolid attention behind.

"If my man Abe Cronkite is right, as he generally is, Travell," said the Judge, "I do believe that your uncle Enoch Faire did put the letter into the bust after all. Let us see," he continued, turning the bust so as to peer closely into its interior through the glass. "Well, I should say he did. Talk about the Gospel according to St. Mark! Why, here is literature as long as the Ten Commandments."

There was a silence of suspense in the room as the guests leaned forward so as not to miss a word. Travell was smiling confidently, as if well assured that the old man of whom he had been so fond, who had been so fond of him, would do him no harm. Blodgett folded his arms tightly like one who dreads the hazard he himself has provoked. Mansfield Grattan shook his head significantly at his spouse, and then they both held themselves dignified but alert.

Sophia Grattan gazed blankly from one to the other of them, and then settled back with an almost childish submission. In the doorway Julie, the maid, was still stationed, but now poised forward like a statue of surprise. Over her shoulder glared the forbidding, defiant face of Miss Purrett, the housekeeper.

"Of course, my dear boy, the money and the house and all are yours," said the Judge. "I have made sure that your not finding this letter for a time can do no more than occasion delay, and that is just what I hope for and want. In a word, while you feel in honor bound not to use the money, you will be able to judge for yourself of the parasites and harpies who have made my life so wretched for years. Of course they will at once infect you with their selfish schemes, the ungrateful grasping Blodgett and his worse half, the detestable son of a Rachel, the presuming Grattans and their silly, subservient daughter."

"Here it is, John," interposed the so-called Miss Purrett, taking from her bosom a glittering coin. "No wonder I couldn't understand why it looked smoother than it felt."

"I found it where no one was apt to look for it, in his Bible. Of course it seems to me too that there may be a message on it that won't do us any harm or Travell any good."

"Old Faire was always changing his mind; you know that from our own experience with him. And so if he really did destroy the sealed letter, as I've about come to believe, for there isn't a sign of it anywhere, though I've hunted high and low, he may have repented of it at the last and written down on the coin his original intentions. I'd flash it on them if I were you."

"If I only had a glass to make sure," hesitated Blodgett.

"Ah, yes, that must be it. You will be interested, all of you, to know what I'm only lately discovered, and that is that my good Uncle Enoch devoted much of his life to collecting a list of mortal sins in writing, marvelously small. I looked away his tools and glass only the other day. Why, what is the matter with you, man?"

"Your pardoning, sir," replied Krantz, the butler, humbly. "I had a sudden idea."

"Well, take this key to the writing desk in my room and fetch down the glass before you have another. Why, nothing short of a ghost ought to make a man start like that."

MODERN WHALING METHODS

MONSTER WIRE CABLE NET USED IN ONE OF THEM.

Revival of the Industry in the South Pacific—New Zealand Grants Concessions to Norwegian Company—Latest Appliances to Be Carried in Its Vessels.

The Marine Department of New Zealand has just granted concessions to a Norwegian whaling company to make use of one or more ports in the Auckland Islands, Stewart Island, Chatham and Bay of Islands, says Vice-Consul-General Henry D. Baker, on special service in New Zealand, in a paper in the *Daily Colonist and Trade Reports*. It is anticipated that the industry will give employment to over 200 men.

The Bluff, in the South Island of New Zealand, will be the headquarters of the intended operations. The vessels to be apportioned to New Zealand are at present in active operation off the South African coast and consist of a large steamer of 5,000 tons and two auxiliary steamers. A project is also on foot to establish the whaling industry in Akaroa Harbor, near Lyttelton, in the South Island, where whales at present are sighted daily. A meeting has been called for the organization of a local company to undertake this project.

Previous to securing the concessions from the New Zealand Government a representative of the Norwegian company was quoted as follows by the *Otago Times*: "The company already has three stations in southern waters, at Durban in Cape Colony, and at the islands of South Georgia and South Shetland, to the south of Cape Colony. Operations have been carried on there with much success in some years. The whales are chased in long boats towed by steam, and when secured are towed to a harbor where, on board a vessel fitted for the purpose, the oil is tried out, portions of the carcass transformed into animal food and the remainder made into fertilizers."

New Zealand has a vessel of 2,000 tons which would suffice for all purposes; this vessel the company would send out from Norway with practical men aboard. In South African waters most of the whales caught are of the humpback variety, the oil of which is used for the manufacture of soap. The blubber and fertilizer are sold to South African farmers, who would take more if we had it to supply them. A considerable amount of British capital is invested in the company in South Africa, and it is proposed to invite New Zealand residents to take monetary shares in the system proposed to be introduced into New Zealand has been in use in Norway for about twenty-five years. It would include boats 100 feet long, fitted with steam engines and capable of travelling ten or twelve miles an hour, the engines being driven at with harpoons from a gun in the bow."

A Hobart newspaper states that this same company is asking the Tasmanian Government to grant it concessions at two ports—Port Davey, on the south coast, and one on the north coast, at a point yet to be fixed for a term of twenty years.

The possibility of turning whales to good commercial account with equipment which would permit of far more success than in the old days of sailing ships, has for the last two years been given much attention in New Zealand. Last year a first class whaler, built in England, arrived at Auckland and is now engaged in operations around the coasts of New Zealand, the Auckland Islands, Campbell Islands, &c. The tonnage and dimensions are 127 tons gross and 44 tons net register, 83 feet over all by 19 feet beam. It is fitted with the most modern appliances, including a harpoon gun at the bow.

South of the Bay of Islands in New Zealand, at Wangamunga (where there is a landlocked harbor), near Cape Brett, some interesting operations have recently been carried on of catching whales by means of huge nets stretching 500 or 600 feet, with a depth of 200 feet, meshed to seven feet, made of three inch wire rope hung on strong wire cables and buoyed by huge floats. These nets close the channel, the ends slightly overlapping each other. The object of the nets is to hamper the whale so that it falls an easy prey to the crews of whaleboats which are near at hand. The whales caught in this manner are used for the manufacture of oil and sulphur bottom varieties and sometimes sperm whales.

The whales caught off New Zealand yield on an average of 100 barrels of oil and a few barrels of sperm. The oil is much used in the rope factories of New Zealand, as it keeps the fibres from rotting, and is also used in the manufacture of soap. It is also used for making candles and soap.

It is said that there are now more whales off the coast of Tasmania and New Zealand than there were a few years ago. The period about thirty years ago, when numbers of American ships hunted in these waters. At that time Hobart, in Tasmania, was the centre of the industry, and until about 1880 a number of ships set out from Hobart in quest of whales, sperm oil at that time ranging from \$400 to \$500 a ton. But with the discovery of oil in the United States and the fact that the price dropped to \$200 a ton and then to \$100. The industry then ceased to pay and became entirely extinct about Tasmania. The cooping trade and whaling industry of Hobart declined. An American steam whaler put into Hobart some twenty years ago for repairs, and with this was the last boat to call in connection with this industry.

Several months ago a school of thirty-seven whales was washed up and stranded on the northwestern coast of Tasmania. A company was quickly organized at Launceston to take advantage of this curious accident, and after a time the company was in a position to take care of the carcasses most of the oil had escaped. The venture, however, paid its promoters, as amounting to the value of about \$40,000 was obtained.

At Eden, in New South Wales, interesting whaling operations are carried on at the present time with the assistance of "killer" whaleboats. The oil of whale is unlike a porpoise. They have fins some six feet in height set in the back. When a number of killers surround them and drive them toward the shore, where they are observed by the whalers, who come upon the scene and dispatch the whales with harpoon guns. The tongues of the whales are thrown out to the killers by the whalers. The dead whales are then hauled ashore, where the blubber is stripped off and the oil extracted.

Influence of "Waverley" in France.
From the London Globe.
Prof. F. J. G. de la Motte, in French, "Les Waverley Novels et la France," published by the University of Edinburgh, commented upon the prodigious success achieved by the Waverley novels in France, and he was of opinion that the success of the Waverley novels, he said, had also a distinct effect on French literature, and as a result of their popularity historical romance gained a strong hold among the French writers.

This influence was still to be observed in current literature and could be traced in the works of the greatest modern original of the French writers. He instanced Victor Hugo, his *Chronique des Temps de Charles IX.*